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THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL SETTLEMENTS AND CHARITY ORGANIZATION.

IN London, where both charity organization and the settlement movement were born, the relations between the two have not always been most cordial. This lack of enthusiasm of each for the work of the other is to be attributed, almost entirely I believe, to the wide difference in the principles and aims of the Charity Organization Society and the settlements; and this difference is largely ascribable to the variance in the economic thought and social conditions of the two periods in which these movements had their birth. The fundamental ideas of the Charity Organization Society were formulated at a time when the Manchester school of political economy swayed the minds of the English people. The doctrine of *laissez-faire* was widely recognized as a most important economic principle. The competitive system was regarded with almost universal approval. Success denoted strength, fitness, righteousness; failure denoted weakness, unfitness to survive, and unrighteousness. The individual causes of distress and poverty were emphasized and discussed. These economic ideas and principles were the foundation upon which the Charity Organization Society was built, and today it is perhaps the foremost association representative of that school of thought which is most extreme in its individualistic opinions. Since the time of its organization the problem of the Charity Organization Society in London has been primarily to manage and organize the givers of relief so as to prevent the character demoralization which is involved in pauperism. With the large question of poverty and the social causes of distress the Charity Organization Society has hardly concerned itself. The economic forces which induce poverty are dealt with by the London society only as speculative problems suited for discussion in conference. The Charity Organization Society has rarely, if ever, striven to eradicate the social causes of poverty,

nor has it promoted sufficient consideration of them in its great and important work of warring against pauperism.

The settlements, on the other hand, were born in an era of new economic thought when the whole of London was in a turmoil of labor and economic questions. It was the year of the "Bitter Cry," when the unemployed marched in great hordes to denounce capital and to protest against the social conditions which, as they would say, forced them into poverty. Since that year the economics of England have not been only of the Manchester school, and those interested in the social movements of England no longer feel that the only causes of distress are individual ones. The settlements, coming into the world at this time of great social unrest, a time when multitudes of workingmen were in wretched poverty, through no fault of their own, but because of general social conditions, very naturally had their attention drawn to working people, and upon working people their attention has been centered ever since. Compared with the Charity Organization Society, they have had little direct personal contact with the pauperized element of society, and they have never devoted themselves to solving the problem of the poorest and most wretched of the community who all of the time live more or less on alms. The field of usefulness which the settlements have marked out for themselves is in educational work and in a fellowship with the order of working people which Charles Booth catalogues as "D." They are that class of working people, of small but regular earnings, who most strenuously fight for economic independence, and stand in more or less constant fear of sickness, death or unemployment. No one's interest can be bound up in this class without his being compelled to deal in some way in his own mind with the many forces which center upon it, and swish it upward and downward almost like drift wood in the sea.

One can see immediately how widely different are the sympathies and the effort of the settlements and the Charity Organization Society in London. In this country for a while we were in a fair way to follow the lines of the two parent social movements. For a time there was a very general criticism against

the methods and purposes of the Charity Organization Society in New York city. During this period in visiting among the settlements I was astonished at the prevalence of feeling manifested against the work that the Charity Organization Society was doing—a feeling entertained especially against such work as followed the lines laid down by the Charity Organization Society in London.

However, in recent years there has been a kind of development in the principles and aims of both charity organization and the settlement movement which has brought them close together. Their fields of work have been different, but each has come to value the work of the other in a way that would not have seemed probable a decade ago. It is noteworthy that the present Charity Organization Society in Chicago was to no slight extent promoted by the settlements. Between 1886, when the society which Rev. S. H. Gurteen organized became “benevolently assimilated” by the Relief and Aid Society, and the winter of the panic, 1893–4, there was no charity organization society in Chicago. Out of the organization which arose to take care of the needy that winter developed the present Charity Organization Society. In the early days of the new movement the settlements assisted in every possible way to keep it alive. The settlements found such demands made upon them by the suffering poor who applied to them for relief that their time and resources were absorbed in the charitable problem. Those things which they had planned as suited to their own effort could not be developed until the responsibility of the needy poor was transferred to other hands. The settlements, therefore, used every means in their power to strengthen and broaden the present “Bureau of Charities.” This association was not supported because the residents of the settlements were always in sympathy with the Charity Organization Society methods preventing elsewhere. Rather, it was aided, so far as I can discover, because it was absolutely necessary to have some organization of the charities of that city, and because the settlements wished to free themselves from the pressure of relief work, which was interfering with their own special activities. In consequence, the Bureau of Charities has

been closely identified with the settlement movement, and has in a way developed certain new ideas concerning the most important work to be done by such an organization.

As the relationship between the settlements and Charity Organization Society in Chicago has been most cordial, it may be interesting to observe what each expected from the other. Above all else, the settlements counted upon the Associated Charities to order the entire charitable machinery of that city. They argued that the Associated Charities is not a new charity. It is in a great measure a new method for using existing charities to the best advantage. The object is to bring the charities of any community into such harmonious association as will permit of perfect individual expression. In other words, there must be little or no conflict, no competition, no overlapping, no waste, in the enormous charitable activity of a great city. The Associated Charities attempts to furnish those necessary integrating services, whereby a unified, concerted action is possible among all the charities of a city. The department store is a combination or integration of several specialized trades—the butcher's, the baker's, and the candlestickmaker's—all brought into co-operation by the synthetic methods of the large mercantile establishment. The charities of a city are a horde of eleemosynary, activities each of which is carefully specialized; but without the associated movement, which introduces into the field of charities the department store methods, there is almost no co-operation, and, in consequence, the institutions fail to attain the maximum of their usefulness.

In the specialized heterogeneity there are relief societies, children's societies, legal and protective societies, hospitals and dispensaries and homes of unnumbered varieties, spread at random over the entire city. Without the Associated Charities we should depend upon these various specialized societies to refer to other specialized societies applications for aid. Even in a department store, where all is simpler because under one roof, there would be great confusion were it not for the man who meets us at the door and directs us accurately to the department we are seeking. Among the charities, where the complications

are greater, and the applicants often very ignorant, in order to give efficiency to our entire machinery we must have one central agency, with branch offices in all parts of the city, which will provide information and guidance to the aged, the crippled, the deaf, the blind, and all others in distress,

Besides desiring this administrative work of the Charity Organization Society, the settlements also demanded that the relief to the poor should be swift, adequate and beneficent. They argued that the whole charitable system, in order to possess these qualities, must be simple enough to be used by any inexperienced person interested in a poor family, or by the very ignorant and unacquainted poor themselves. If there is a family in want, it is absolutely necessary for some one to seek out among the various charities the particular one, two or three societies which are especially adapted to give the help required. Under our present arrangement, a poor family must be sent from building to building, and from charity to charity. If the poor person has no car-fare, and is very hungry, or perhaps old and crippled, the necessary effort to make even an application is almost beyond him. Many poor applicants have been known who, after being sent from place to place for days, have returned to their homes heart-sick and empty-handed. Too many good people connected with charities do not realize the cruelty which often results from a careless referring of the poor from society to society.

The cause of all this trouble, as the settlements maintain, is first of all the extreme and necessary specialization of our present day charitable work; and, second, the impossibility of any person of ordinary knowledge of the charities using the machinery with certainty and rapidity. The charities are so many, and the technicalities guarding the expenditure of their resources so numerous, that business men who subscribe thousands of dollars yearly to them often find it impossible to use these charities with despatch.

It is surely clear, the settlements said, that before we can gain in any real sense the best results from millions of dollars spent in charity, we must have a directive agency, some organi-

zation that corresponds to the elevator boy, or to the one who stands at the door of a department store. The need—the greatest need of all—is a central agency where all the poor may apply. Such an agency can inquire into the situation immediately and thoroughly, and the case can be referred to the proper relief sources with the certainty that it will receive the necessary treatment. To satisfy this great need for a directive central agency is one of the objects of the Associated Charities movement.

In brief, the first and most practical demands of settlements upon the Charity Organization Society were that relief work should be done quickly and well; that the Charity Organization Society should be a ready and accurate instrument for using all the charities in the city; and, third, that the relief work should not fail to profit by the various lessons which English students of pauperism have bequeathed to the present-day work of relief. These are the minimum demands of the settlement movement upon charity organization.

There were requirements which charity organization placed upon settlements quite as important from their point of view; in the immediate field of relief work the Charity Organization Society protests against gush and sentimentality, which so often are exhibited by the immature and untrained residents of the settlements. In the earlier days of the settlement movement such emotional display was undoubtedly much more common than at present, but even today in those settlements where the workers are shifting, and where each year a number of young people just from college come into residence, the desire to relieve everyone's needs immediately, generously, and without question, is not infrequently evidenced. The Charity Organization Society in Chicago, therefore, never fails to urge the settlements to co-operate with them closely on their district committees, and to watch the methods of the Charity Organization Society with care and continuity. The lesson which the Charity Organization Society constantly presses upon settlement residents is that relief should be careful, that it should be considerate, and that it should be administered so as to uplift instead of to degrade. Over-

lapping on the part of the settlements is keenly censured, and friendly service on the part of settlement residents is always sought for.

Having lived in settlements all of the time I have worked in the Charity Organization Society, I have had opportunity to know many workers in both movements. I have observed what seems to me to be a striking difference in temperament between the people who live in settlements and the paid workers of the Charity Organization Society. There are exceptions in each movement, but my experience has led me to believe that, as a rule, the philosophy of "Don't, don't," has so affected the will of many of the Charity Organization Society workers that, in their attitude toward reform movements, they have developed into what, for want of a better name, may be called the "Hamlet" type. The agent is always pondering whether "to do or not to do." He is hesitant over every activity. Suffering is before him; starvation about him. He longs to give adequate, generous and immediate relief, but before him always rise the warnings: "Be careful of pauperism; give no relief if you can help it; destroy no man's independence." It seems to me that no such hard requirements in the matter of delicately balancing the right and the wrong are placed upon any other persons as those placed upon the well-trained worker in the Charity Organization Society. On the other hand, the activities of the settlement have fewer pauperizing dangers, and the workers may too easily have an unbounded enthusiasm. They see a thousand things to do, and are less often troubled with the moral questionings which afflict the visitor of the Charity Organization Society. They soon have a fellowship with the people about them, and feel that as much as possible should be done for their neighbors, not necessarily in a charitable way, but in the way of social reforms, and in work of various kinds which one finds to do. The settlement resident is in danger of approaching the "Don Quixote" type. He is constantly doing, urging; he is constantly pressing forward, sometimes tilting at wind-mills, often making mistakes, at times, doubtless, doing injury, but filled with earnestness and warmth of purpose, and with not too

much of question. Perhaps the most important reason for the settlement and the Charity Organization Society not co-operating more closely is to be found in this temperamental difference. Each in a certain way values and appreciates the work of the other, but the habits of their minds are different, their thoughts take different directions, and the work of their lives is incited by widely different stimuli.

However, the practical demands of a purely immediate character which are made by either of these social movements upon the other do not to my mind constitute the most important phase of the subject under discussion. I believe that there is a vague feeling common throughout the settlements, and not uncommon among the workers of the Charity Organization Society, that there is a larger work to be done than has yet been accomplished by either of these reform agencies. They point to the work of Charles Booth, who several years ago showed so clearly the conditions of poverty and the extent of it, and the impossibility of doing anything really to improve the conditions of the great mass of poor by the efforts to which the Charity Organization Society and settlements have in general confined themselves. Rowntree, in his recent investigation of the conditions in York, England, has again wakened us to this broad social conception of poverty. Approximately 30 per cent. of the people in London, and in the villages of England, and perhaps in the cities of America, are foredoomed to live in that restricted class which may now be almost scientifically called "the poor." There are families whose total earnings are insufficient to obtain the minimum necessities for the maintenance of a merely physical efficiency; and other families whose total earnings, if wisely and carefully spent, will only supply these requirements. Speaking of Class B in Mr. Charles Booth's classification of the people of London, Mr. John A. Hobson, the English economist, says:

Here is a class unable by their utmost efforts to obtain such regular wage as will afford any security of decent animal existence; disabled by their bringing-up, and by the whole industrial condition of their life from getting remunerative work, or from doing such work if they could get it; compelled to live and bring up their families under conditions which preclude the pos-

sibility of a sound mind in a sound body. All endeavors to deal with these people, in their existing economic environment, and to make them religious, moral, intellectual, or even cleanly, are little else than wanton misdirection of reform energy, attempts to solve higher problems before lower ones, attempts to grow the ripe flowers of civilization before we have grown the stalk, or even furnished soil out of which the stalk may grow.

This waste of energy is due to careless, or sometimes wilful, neglect of the order of the evolution of human wants. It may, of course, be possible sometimes to stimulate, and even to satisfy, wants in individuals out of their healthy natural order; moral miracles may be performed in slum life; "forcing" is possible in the growth of human beings, as of plants, but it is always a wasteful and weakening process. The sound economical disposition of reform energy in dealing with Class B will involve, first, a concentrated attention to the industrial supports of its evil material environment, the questions of low wages, irregularity and insufficiency of employment, the housing problem, and the several aspects of "sweating." The various philanthropic energies thrown into spiritual and moral work among this class would gain each its particular object far more effectively, if its possessors recognized the historical priority of the economic problems, and concentrated first on their solution, reserving their specific forms of higher missionary work for those social grades where these specific needs were just beginning to emerge in the development of life.

There may be some who think this view errs by representing the slum-dweller too much as the slave of his environment, and are disposed to insist that education and moral stimulus applied to individual members of Class B may induce them to make a successful effort to improve their own material and economic condition. To such I would reply, firstly, that such cases constitute the "moral miracles" to which reference is already made, and their rare existence abates but slightly the waste of reform energy; and, secondly, that the ability of one, or any, individual to get out of his class no more implies the ability of the whole class, or any considerable proportion of a class, to get out of its condition than the fact that any boy in America is able to become President of the United States implies the ability of all the boys living at any given time to attain this position. To impute this power to a class involves a total misunderstanding of the nature of individual and class competition in industrial society.

One can hardly believe that the Charity Organization Society will much longer restrict its activities to the narrow field to which it has mainly confined itself heretofore. To be sure, in divers places (conspicuously in New York), and at various times, the Charity Organization Society has undertaken preventive work, but an inquiry now and then, a public bath or nursery, hardly

constitute a broad policy in that direction. To me there seem to be strong evidences throughout the country that we are moving toward a far more radical and thorough handling of the question of poverty. The members of our boards and councils have been brought much nearer an intelligent comprehension of the economic and industrial problems than anyone looking forward a quarter of a century could have foreseen. Some Charity Organization Society boards are still narrow, and for some time yet may desire to pursue a policy of dealing with poverty only through those cases of distress which appeal for assistance at the offices of the society. Some boards of the Charity Organization Society, however, certainly could at present combine with the settlements to do far more effective work in dealing with the whole problem of poverty.

There are two phases of the broader problem which should be undertaken by the people who are at the present time interested in charity organization and the settlement movement. There is no question but that some boards will maintain that it is not the work of the Charity Organization Society to do more than handle the various cases of distress which make application to them. On the other hand, it may be asked them, if it is not the duty of the Charity Organization Society whose duty is it to bring to the attention to all the people those social causes which are bringing the people to need? And who else but the Charity Organization Society should undertake to deal with the whole problem? Surely some specialized society, such as a relief organization, a nurses' society, a hospital, or other such organization, cannot undertake to do anything in this broader field.

This is not a radical innovation in the work of these two movements. I believe upon proper consideration it will be found that we have already been rapidly tending toward this enlarged field of activity. Mr. Robert A. Woods has long been urging the Charity Organization Society to stop using edged tools and cruel repressive measures upon that inefficient, inebriate, and immoral class which frequents the lowest dives of our cities. He has already shown the folly of such effort, and has preached a more enlightened policy in dealing with these

people. For many years individuals here and there have urged that the degenerate and the permanently defective classes of the community should be segregated so as to prevent propagation. Now and then we have heard great numbers of people pleading for a more gentle and humane care for those helpless members of the community who have lived lives of usefulness, but who, when age or illness or other misfortune has overtaken them, have no other prospect than to suffer along in a slow process of starvation until they die. Surely the Charity Organization Society and the settlements have long since tacitly agreed that there should be a most active and vigorous campaign for gentle and kindly care for the aged, the insane, the feeble-minded, and the epileptic. Have they not also agreed that efforts should be made to cure as far as possible, and to re-establish in the community to as great an extent as possible, all of those who are inebriate, tubercular, crippled, diseased; and those, too, who are blind, deaf and dumb, and temporarily helpless? No one who has read the reports of the various conferences of Charities and Corrections can doubt that there is a very definite opinion on this subject. Many have urged that there should be correctional and educational treatment for tramps and beggars, for the inefficient, the incapable, the shiftless, the perverted, and the pauperized elements of our community.

This, then, is one line of activity upon which there could be a combination and co-operation between these two great movements. It is in a way a social dredging process, but a process upon which we are all so thoroughly agreed that a vigorous and active campaign might be undertaken to stir up the interest of the community in its behalf. The work of charity organization can hardly be said to have commenced when we find all over the country epileptics, the feeble-minded, and the harmless insane living unprotected in the community, at the mercy of sporadic private charity. No one can doubt that we have hardly made a beginning when we see the aged poor disgracefully neglected, the blind begging in every one of our large cities, and the vicious, incapable, and inefficient persons living in our "Tenderloin" districts, and making those portions of our

cities hideous with vice and all forms of perverted sexuality. This work, as I see it, largely confines itself to dealing with Classes A and B, according to Mr. Booth's classification, and occasionally to assist certain individuals in Class C.

The settlements will surely combine with the Charity Organization Society in its efforts to bring about a more enlightened policy in dealing with the obviously dependent and defective classes in the community. The Charity Organization Society will surely co-operate and assist the settlements in whatever preventive efforts they make in behalf of Class D. The work of settlements is confined largely to the latter class, and only in so far as the settlements co-operate with trades unions may it be said to influence in any important way Classes E and F. With Class D there are several preventive measures upon which the settlements and charity organization should combine their efforts. The questions of housing, sanitation, of encouraging insurance features, of doing away with child labor and sweat-shop conditions, injurious trades and insanitary workshops, are all of such immediate importance as to form the basis for active and encouraging preventive work in behalf of Class D. This may seem a radical suggestion, but I believe, if consideration is given to it, that we shall be found to have advanced farther than we realize.

In New York city the settlements and the Charity Organization Society have already co-operated warmly in bringing about an important reform which will do much to prevent poverty. Several years ago in New York Mr. Lawrence Veiller, at one time resident in a settlement, believing that the most serious question affecting the lives and welfare of the working people was the matter of housing, sought to form a separate Improved Housing Association to investigate conditions and to carry through necessary reforms in that field. The present secretary of the New York Charity Organization Society, Mr. Devine, dissuaded him from organizing a separate association, and instead instituted a Special Committee on Tenement-House Reform. As a result of this wisdom and breadth of view, charity organization took the most important step that it has ever taken in

in the history of the organization, to deal in a preventive way with some of the most distressing conditions which afflict Class D.

Recently a settlement worker proposed to Mr. Devine that the Charity Organization Society organize a committee to investigate the conditions which were propagating tuberculosis. Mr. Devine, after considering the matter and seeing how fertile a cause of poverty tuberculosis is, decided to form a committee of the Charity Organization, and to begin active measures for a crusade against this disease.

As a beginning these two vigorous and fundamental measures undertaken by the Charity Organization Society, encouraged and assisted by the settlements, are of immense importance. They may perhaps mark an epoch in this country in the policy of philanthropic organizations. We have long talked about striking at the causes of poverty; we have (even as long ago as the forties and fifties) done something to awaken the public to certain social causes of poverty; but the work of the foremost settlements and the two recent movements of the Charity Organization Society in New York for housing reform and for the control of tuberculosis, mark a new era in philanthropic work.

These two organizations, which are so much out of touch in London, and which are without co-operation pursuing their various paths, have, it seems to me, tremendous common opportunities in America, where we understand each other, where we respect each other, and where we are willing to co-operate and assist each other in every possible way. The Charity Organization Society, because of the very nature of its activities, is very likely to spend a great part of its time in dealing with the individual causes of poverty; the settlements are likely to spend their time in viewing and preventing as far as is possible the social causes of poverty. It will be a pity if movements which so supplement each other as these two movements plainly do, should not co-operate closely in so far as their two fields of effort overlap. There are things which the Charity Organization Society must do which I have not mentioned; there are multi-

tudes of things which the settlements must do that I have not mentioned ; but in segregating the irredeemable portions of the community, and in the various forms of preventive work with Class D, the settlements and the Charity Organization Society should co-operate in a new and larger handling of the problem of poverty than either has undertaken until recently, or can now undertake singly.

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